

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1049

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT KS

SUBJECT: ROKG MAKES OVERTURES TOWARD CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

1. CHRISTAIN MEMBERS OF
GOVERNMENT'S DRP AND YUCHONGHOE IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
CALLED ON CARDINAL KIM, BISHOP CHI HAK-SUN AND
REV. KIM KWAN-SOK, SEC. GENL. NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES-KOREA ON FEB 18 IN ORDER
TO OFFER RESUMPTION OF A DIALOGUE.
2. CHRISTIAN LEADERS WELCOMED THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS
AND THE GOVERNMENTS'S CONCILIATORY GUESTURES, BUT INSISTED
THAT TO MAKE RECONCILIATION MEANINGFUL THE ROKG MUST
ALSO OFFER POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORMS. WITH REGARD
TO THOSE REMAINING IN PRISONS, CHURCHES INSIST THAT THEY
BE GIVEN CIVILIAN TRIALS, AND THAT THOSE RELEASED RECEIVE
FULL PARDONS.
3. CARDINAL KIM CONDUCTED THANKSGIVING SERVICES
EVENING OF FEB 18 AT MYONGDONG CATHEDRAL WITH
BISHOP CHI PRESENT. PROTESTANTS PLAN SIMILAR SERVICES
FEB 19 AND 23.

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4. REV. KIM KWAN-SOK TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE WAS VISITED
BY YUCHUNGHOE REPRESENTATIVE ON FEB 18 WHO INFORMED

HIM THAT CHRISTIAN MEMBERS OF YUCHUNGHOE AND DRP IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAD FORMED A SPECIAL POLICY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON CHURCH-STATE POLICY TO THE BLUE HOUSE. THE COMMITTEE WELCOMED INFORMATION OR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CHURCHES ON ANY SUBJECT, INCLUDING CHURCH GRIEVANCES, CHURCH AND POLITICS, AND EVEN SUGGESTIONS ON CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.

5. REV. KIM WAS ALSO TOLD THAT ONE OF PRESIDENT PARK'S CHIEF ADVISORS ON RELIGIOUS MATTERS, EVANGELIST PASTOR CHI DONG SHIK, WHO REPORTEDLY HAD BEEN PROMOTING THE REV. MCINTIRE LINE CHARGING CHRISTIAN OPPOSITION WITH BEING COMMUNIST-TAINTED AND REVOLUTIONARY, HAS NOW FALLEN OUT OF PRESIDENTIAL FAVOR. ROKG IS SAID TO BE WILLING TO TAKE NEW LOOK AT CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. REPORTEDLY KCIA HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DO NEW EVALUATION OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION GROUPS AND CHURCH PROTEST ACTIVITIES.

6. REV. KIM SAID THAT NCCC-K IS ALWAYS PREPARED FOR DIALOGUE WITH ROKG AND HAS AGREED TO MEETING WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY GROUP ON CHURCH GRIEVANCES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS. NCCC-K HAS ALSO ISSUED DECLARATION HAILING RELEASE OF PRISONERS.

7. REV. KIM REMAINED SKEPTICAL THAT IN ABSENCE OF FURTHER REFORM MEASURES OPPOSITION COULD BE SILENCED. HOWEVER, NCCC-K FOR ITS PART DID NOT SEEK AGGRAVATION OF CONFLICT. IT HAD ISSUED STRONG STATEMENT REJECTING REFERENDUM AS FRAUD, BUT BELIEVES THAT IF SITUATION REMAINS REASONABLY CALM ROKG WILL BE SINCERE IN ITS EFFORTS TO CONTINUE ATMOSPHERE OF DETENTE. HE ASCRIBED CURRENT POLICY TO PRESIDENT PARK'S GROWING AWARENESS OF HIS WEAKNESS AS REFLECTED IN MANIFEST APATHY TOWARD REFERENDUM AND EXTENSIVE VOTE RIGGING. BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE EXPRESSED SOME OPTIMISM TOWARD PEACEFUL CHANGES.
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